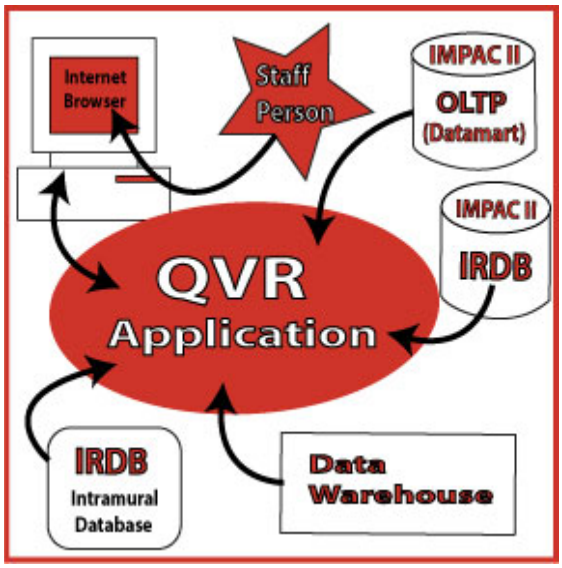
INTERFACE Online
Published by the Center for Information Technology, National Institutes of Health

Spring 2007 [Number 237]



Major Articles

Published By
Center for Information Technology
National Institutes of Health
Health and Human Services

Table of Contents

Articles

http://www.nih.gov is one of the most frequently visited federal government Web sites.

	November	*December*	*January*
Total hits for the month	55,693,922	53,996,618	76,367,017
Hits per day	1,856,464	1,741,826	2,463,452
Different individuals per month	2,557,290	2,107,944	2,608,444

The server has been up 100% of the time* during January 2007.
** Server uptime is independent of network accessibility.*

Table of Contents

The QVR System—An Example of CIT–eRA Cooperation

How familiar are you with the Query/View/Response (QVR) System at NIH? Most likely you've heard the name in connection with grants but are perhaps not sure what this system encompasses. Then keep reading: The QVR system is a successful information technology tool supported by both CIT and the eRA project working together, and this article not only summarizes its development and its features but also offers a special focus on how the QVR team identified and responded to the needs for information relating to the grant applications in the IMPAC system.

The grants process and the IMPAC system—background in a nutshell

NIH has a budget in excess of 28 billion dollars per fiscal year. By far the largest portion of that budget is obligated in the form of grants for biomedical research conducted at institutions across the United States and around the world. NIH receives and processes over 88,000 grant applications per year.

These grant applications are complicated, detailed, and extensive documents. They contain administrative information, budgetary information, details on research protocols, diagrams, photographs, charts, and graphs. They vary in length from around fifty pages to upward of several hundred pages or more. Prior to 2006, all of this documentation was submitted in the form of paper documents. Now the NIH grant application process is transitioning from paper to electronic submission.

Most of the applications are for NIH funding but there are other agencies that use the NIH system, including AHRQ (Agency for Health Care Research and Quality), FDA (Food and Drug Administration), SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration), and the CDC (Center for Disease Control). Almost all of the applications go through extensive receipt, referral, and review processes, with only the best ones eventually being funded.

The IMPAC system is the repository for data on ALL applications submitted to NIH for processing. In fact, the IMPAC system has data on applications and funded grants stretching from the present all the way back to 1970. As indicated above, NIH provides the receipt, referral, and review processes for several other government agencies. In fact, it is certain this service will be expanding in future years to other participating federal agencies. As the grants business process moves forward, numerous data fields are populated and, in many cases, modified. One can only imagine the vastness of the data available in this system.

The key question is how to **access the data** that provides the knowledge for the business processes to move forward for each application and grant. It involves much more than simply retrieval of information on individual projects. Because the grants process is the major part of the budget of NIH and because NIH is the focal point for public health research in the United States and, indeed in the world, there is a tremendous need to be able to analyze the grant portfolio to identify breakthroughs in science, as well as gaps that may need to be filled by targeted research.

How does NIH handle all of these myriad requirements? The answer is vastly more complicated than the extent of this article but, put simply, the answer is the IMPAC system and the various information tools that are available to staff. Read on.

The QVR system

Now we come to the QVR system and how it came to fill both the void of easy access to IMPAC data as well as the need for an analysis capability of application and grant data. The QVR system is a user-friendly system for retrieving and analyzing data relating to these projects. The system originated in 2001 as an extension of the Electronic Council Book (the ECB is a Web-based tool for staff and advisory councils to conduct their business). Since then, the QVR has become an extremely popular application with over 8,000 hits on the system per work day. It is used by all ICs at NIH, as well as many other DHHS components, AHRQ, FDA, CDC, and SAMHSA.

The twin hallmarks of the success of QVR are responsiveness to the customer's needs and a rapid development process. The user community works hand-in-hand with the QVR developers to identify needs. These needs are then prioritized through the QVR Steering Committee and features are developed, tested, and moved into production, often within a couple of weeks. These hallmarks are the main reason for users' high degree of satisfaction with the system.

One current example—the training profile:

The following example typifies the teamwork, cooperation with the user community, and rapid development process that is the QVR system. In the fall of 2006, there were discussions at the QVR Steering Committee meeting about the need for a retrieval and analysis function for trainees on NIH training grants. As the idea was further explored, it was discovered there existed a substantial number of records in the IMPAC database on the trainees on training grants. At the same time, there were discussions between the QVR team and NIH staff involved in "program evaluation" within the ICs about creating an IT tool to capture information on these training records. Taking this nascent concept, the QVR team moved ahead to explore how this could be done.

Concurrently, activists in the program evaluation community—Sarah Glavin and Janet Guthrie—went ahead with an application for evaluation funds for the project. Shortly after funding was secured, the QVR team produced a prototype retrieval and analysis tool—the Training Profile. It was presented to the newly formed Training Steering Committee for their comments and suggestions. Within weeks it was presented to a wider audience of training program directors for their input. Again, within weeks, the Training Profile-beta version was put into production. Since that time, formal training classes have been offered on this new QVR feature, and the user reception has been tremendously positive. Throughout this brief development cycle many features were changed and improved based on user suggestions.

What do we have? The Training Profile has access to over 450,000 records on trainees. It provides the ability to assess the training history of current applicants and grantees. It also offers the ability to evaluate the application and grants success of trainees from as far back as 1980. In addition, there were also three Standard Reports created that allow for detailed analysis of the trainees on various types of training programs.

The QVR developmental paradigm

Development of the Training Profile has by no means been deemed complete at this point. Nor has the QVR team ever really finished with development and refinements of the other user profiles. The QVR development process takes advantage of every-day users to continually refine and expand existing systems. In fact, in addition to the direct feedback from the steering committee and users, QVR's extensive user logs are also utilized. The QVR team tracks ALL users of the system. Special attention is paid to power users—those who use the system frequently or submit complex searches. In addition, all error messages are tracked.

QVR team members frequently contact these individuals to help them solve the search problem they have encountered but, more significantly, we discuss with them how they are using the system: What about the search screen is confusing? What was the cause of error in their search? Team members then often steer the conversation to other topics that help them further refine the system. What are the users trying to do? What will these data be used for? Where are they positioned in the grants business process? The

QVR team also takes the opportunity to point out features of the system that may relate directly to the part of the business process users are involved in. The model for these conversations is to solve the problem and learn from the user.

It could be argued that this is a very inefficient use of developer time and effort. However, this approach accomplishes two very important things: First, it brings the developers into a direct relationship with the end-users of the system. There is no one trying to "interpret" user needs to the developers. From these direct contacts the team has received invaluable user guidance for further development of the system.

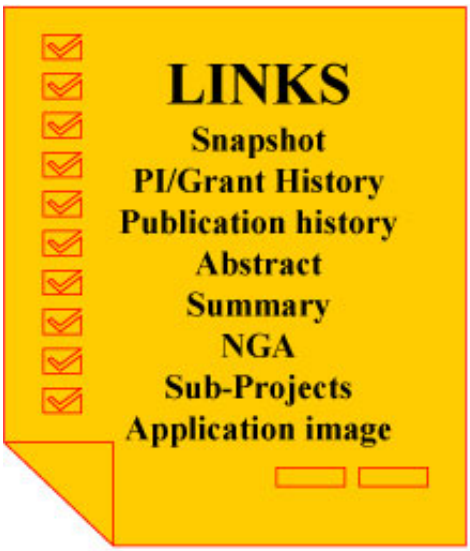
Secondly, there is a less visible but more important outcome. Each member of the development team REALLY understands the details of the business process used in conjunction with the IMPAC database. This allows them to use their creativity more effectively in future development efforts. Indeed, many of the enhancements to the system have come directly from the creative minds of the development team members—often based on a few, disconnected suggestions from users. It brings real excitement to the system.

The QVR system—the nuts and bolts of the system:

The QVR system has a wide range of features. Here is a brief summary of the major features:

User Profiles: There are four different user profiles in the system. Each profile provides for retrieval of information that relates to business processes at NIH and the other federal organizations that use the system. They allow users to create and retrieve information in a variety of formats.

Main Profiles: The main QVR user profiles allow access to information on all application/grant records in the IMPAC system for the last seven years (currently that includes fiscal years 2007 to 2000). The Main profile has three search screens available. The system started with what is now called the Main (Original) search screen. That screen has over 70 search items organized into logical sections (PI, Budget, Review/Program, Output/Sort, etc.). In response to customer needs, the Main (New) search screen, which brought the most frequently used search items to the top of the search screen, was developed. In addition, a Quick Search screen that is designed for new users who need to have only a limited number of search items available was added to the system.



As the system developed and as users suggested new ideas, three new user profiles have been developed. Each of these is briefly highlighted below.

Person Profile: This profile is designed to allow staff to identify scientists in various fields of research. It has a database of over 275,000 records and is searchable on the basis of a wide range of criteria, including name, country, scientific expertise, previous grant history, degree, etc. The hitlist that is retrieved allows the user to examine more detailed information through links to the selected record. For example, one can retrieve the entire grant history for a person, their degree/expertise, committee history, etc.

History Profile: This profile allows users to access IMPAC data from 1970 to the present. There are two main reasons that this is a separate profile:

1) As the IMPAC system evolved over the years more and more data items were incorporated into it. Thus, many of the items do not "track" completely through all years of data.
2) The entire IMPAC database is massive. In order to make the QVR system respond to searches quickly, it is necessary to partition along logical search lines.

It was determined that most users needed information from the most recent seven years of data. For those needing to search deep into IMPAC history this profile provided that capability.

Training Profile: This is the most recent addition to the QVR system. It is mostly covered in the example above but it is worth reinforcing the scope of this single undertaking. It provides access to a database of over 450,000 records on trainees (most of the "T", "K" and "F" funding activities). One may search current applicants/grantees and retrieve their previous training experience. Also, users may search previous trainees and determine their subsequent application/grant activity. In addition, it has three standard reports that allow for detailed analysis of data relating to the trainees.

Hitlists: The system offers several hitlists that are customized to user needs. The basic hitlist provides one line of data. The Basic Hitlist (Detailed) provides much more information and gives several options for sorting the data. These hitlists have links to the application image, Notice of Grant Award, summary statement, snapshot, grant abstract, grant history, and PI history. In addition, there are links that open an email screen to either the PI or Program Manager on the project. There is also a "Summary" hitlist that is designed to provide several options for downloading and printing summary statements.

In addition to the hitlists, the system also offers a custom download and a Standard Report output that offers a wide range of formatted reports.

Custom Download: QVR has the ability to download data to a spreadsheet or local database from a list of over 300 data items sourced from IMPAC and the Data Warehouse. This feature is used extensively by extramural staff.

Standard Reports: QVR provides 48 Standard Reports to users. These reports are designed for Scientific Program managers, Grants Management staff, Review staff, Budget Offices—essentially every category of position among extramural staff. All of these reports are the product of suggestions by QVR users.

PubMed: The system has a link to PubMed based on the PI name or the grant number. This allows staff to evaluate the productivity of particular grantees as well as the productivity of particular projects.

IC-Specific codes: The QVR team has developed a production system in conjunction with the SCS On Demand project, which allows institute staff to query on the basis of that ICs own scientific codes as well as the full range of search parameters available through the QVR screens. This greatly expands the capability of QVR and is being demonstrated to other interested ICs.

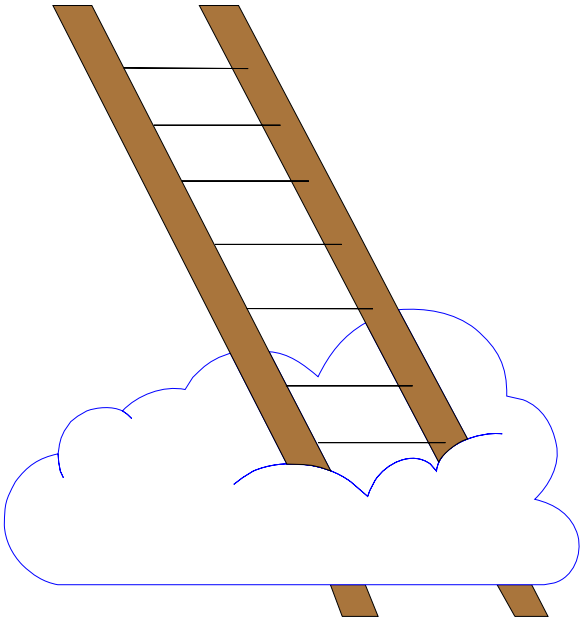
Initiative Tracking and Checkbook System: The QVR team has worked with NIDDK to provide a series of additional features that are IC-specific. The initiative Tracking and Checkbook System accesses data stored in a NIDDK local system and merges it with IMPAC and Data Warehouse data available through QVR. It allows NIDDK staff to track their scientific initiatives, create payplans, and generate reports that facilitate managing their scientific portfolio.

Pre-processed grant applications: The QVR system pre-processes the scanned image of the grant application and converts it to a text file. This procedure allows the system to extract specific sections of the grant application for use by staff.

One transforming event and what the future holds

It seems the sky is the limit in many respects. There are new opportunities available wherever you look. Here is just one of them that has already happened. There are many others and more are being realized as we move forward.

Transforming event— A look back at a seemingly simple event that vastly changed the grants process illustrates the power of transforming events and suggests future IT applications. In the beginning of 2002, it was decided to capture the scanned image of all grant applications, bookmark the file accordingly, and make it available through the IMPAC system.



Prior to that time, if a staff person from an IC that did not have primary assignment of a particular application wanted a copy of the application, they would have to request a copy from the primary IC. This was all too often a drawn-out process because the time-consuming work of copying and sending the requested applications created quite a large backlog of requests for the ICs involved. With the scanned image (and the QVR system) all IC staffers now had to do was click on the "IMG" link and the full text of the applications appeared in a PDF format—information was immediately available throughout the NIH and among all other agencies using the QVR system.

The eRA is on the verge of completing the transformation from paper applications to electronic submissions. Having access to all applications in electronic format will open many doors for information and analysis.

In summary, we are in a very exciting time in information technology at the NIH. The fusion of the grants process and IT has huge potential. Stay tuned.

NBS is Deploying in Two Waves in 2007: Are You and Your Desktop Ready?

The NIH Business System (NBS) launched *Supply and Replenishment and associated Financials* on February 20th. *Acquisitions, Contracts, Property, and their associated Financials* will be released in May. If you are designated as an NBS user for any of these business areas, then just as you need to be trained to use the system, your desktop needs to be ready, too.

How do you know if you are designated as an NBS user and if your desktop is ready?
The answer is simple … ASK YOUR ADVOCATE!

Finding your advocate

How do you find your Advocate?

1. Log on to http://my.nih.gov
2. Select "My Communities" at the top of the page
3. Choose "Training and Communications" from the drop down menu
4. Click on your IC or OD component under Advocate

How your advocate helps you

Your Advocate can tell you which roles you will have in the System and identify your Hardware/Software Readiness Contact. That person can help you with understanding the following readiness checklist items:

- Do you have a network login?
- Do you have a Microsoft Outlook Exchange email address?
- Does your desktop have all the necessary hardware and software configurations?
- Are the printers you plan to use for NBS business registered?

Your Executive Officer and your Advocate will be certifying that you are trained and your desktop is ready before you "go live" in the System. They, in turn, will rely on your Hardware/Software Readiness Contact to verify that your desktop and printer(s) are "good to go." So relax, get a good night's sleep before your training session, and welcome to NBS!

NIH and CIT Breaking through Communications Barriers

NIH NexTalk Telephony Services (NTS)

NIH, with the help of CIT, is improving communication by providing access to its Institutes and Centers for all citizens -- including the deaf, hard of hearing and speech impaired. Most often citizens make initial contact by phone, or in the case of the deaf or hard of hearing, by TTY. Implementing NIH NexTalk Telephony Services (NTS) is the next step to advance the communications technology for those now relying solely on TTY.

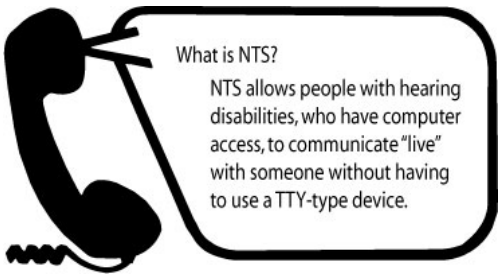
NTS services and user support offered by CIT

Currently, CIT is running a NexTalk-service pilot project with five participating ICs: OD, NLM, NIGMS, NCI and CIT. Once we are satisfied with the program's performance and all user issues have been addressed, CIT will offer NTS as a central NIH production service with two setup options: (1) NTS domains self-administered by ICs or (2) CIT-administered NTS domains. Once the pilot project is successfully completed and we roll-out the NexTalk service NIH-wide, we will let you know more about the details of signing up/registering for the service and how it will be funded. Please visit *Interface* at http://datacenter.cit.nih.gov/interface/ and the NTS Web site at http://nihnextalk.cit.nih.gov for updates.

CIT will be maintaining and supporting NTS as follows:

- 24/7 server support
- Timed diagnostics feature - this allows the NTS system to launch diagnostic scripts and other processes, and to send out email notifications in the event of any problems such as a T1 line going down.
- 1 hour response time on connectivity problems to resolve or escalate
- 24/7 On Call service
- Redundant server with automatic fail-over if an NTS server should go down

In addition, the NIH Help Desk provides a single point of contact for phone calls, email, and Web-based requests for technical assistance. To submit a Service Request, go to the NIH Help Desk Web site (http://ithelpdesk.nih.gov) or call 301-496-HELP (301-496-4357), 866-319-4357 (toll free), or 301-496-8294 (TTY).



What is NTS?

The NexTalk system (NTS) allows people with hearing disabilities, who have computer access, to communicate "live" with someone without having to use a TTY-type device. There is no audio component to the client and all textual functions of the client are certified to be Section 508 compliant, which requires that federal agencies' electronic and information technology (EIT) is accessible to people with disabilities.

NTS features

NexTalk is an Internet-based, live text communication system with special provisions for the communication needs of the deaf and hard of hearing. The NIH NexTalk software application, developed by NXi Communications, Inc., enables deaf persons to communicate with anyone, hearing or deaf, across telephone networks, the Internet, or a LAN/WAN without having to use a TTY-type device. It simultaneously offers advanced communications and messaging features. It is a blending of telephone and computer technologies that links TTY callers with every NexTalk user on their local and wide area networks – at NIH this would mean the local area networks within an IC as well as the networks of all participating ICs. Also, with NexTalk, any TTY call can be answered and then transferred to another NexTalk user or group of users via your PC.

It provides many features such as text answering machine, custom phone books, TTY call transfer, and TTY conference capability with multiple NexTalk users. The software is installed directly on a user's desktop system.

NTS Features:

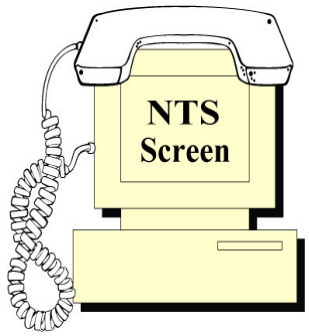
- Make a Relay call
- Receive a Relay call
- Receive "Text Mail" messages that are forwarded to an email address
- Call or accept text calls by any other NexTalk users
- Transfer calls to other NexTalk users
- Create Conference calls
- Send and receive Instant Messages
- Call or accept calls from a TTY
- Receive a call from a TTY to the NexTalk client
- "Call" anyone with an email account

Understanding TTY

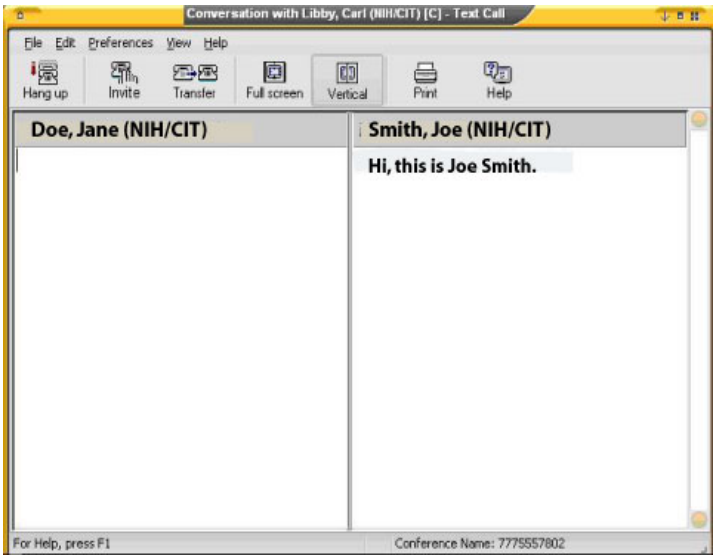
To understand NexTalk, an understanding of TTY communications is necessary. The TTY is a communication device used by deaf or hard-of-hearing people that connects to the standard phone line and consists of a keyboard and a small display to view the scrolling text of the conversation. The person responding to the TTY call must be trained in the technology as well.

How NTS works

NexTalk is a software application that installs directly on a user's Windows PC and will eventually serve as a viable alternative to TTYs for the deaf and hard of hearing across agencies.



When a TTY call is made to an NTS user, it goes through the public switched telephone network (PSTN). The call is then transferred to the NTS network server by a communication card via a T1 phone line. Once in the network, the call is directed to the user(s) associated with the dialed phone number. The NTS server converts TTY messages into a format that can be moved to the network server as readable text much like instant messaging.



When a call is answered, a screen called the *conversation viewer* appears (see illustration above). The conversation is then entirely "real time", i.e. as either the user or the TTY caller type words, the characters appear simultaneously on the other participant's screen. A send button, therefore, is not necessary.

Further information on NexTalk (NTS)

Are you interested in NTS, or do you have further questions about the service? For further information and to learn more about NIH NexTalk services please visit the Web site: http://nihnextalk.cit.nih.gov.

Upgrades and Improved Communication Lines to Off-Campus Co-location Site

CIT manages multiple co-location sites for NIH, both on and off campus. Co-location allows customers to house their own hardware in a secure, climate-controlled environment with UPS Protected Power and 24-hour access to their equipment. As detailed in *Interface* issue #236, last year the on-campus co-location was greatly expanded and upgraded.

The off-campus co-location site

Now, the off-campus co-location site has also received important upgrades. The off-campus site, which is in a secure commercial location in Northern Virginia (Sterling), 30 miles from Bethesda, is connected to the NIH campus by an extremely high bandwidth network. Run under the auspices of CIT, the off-campus co-location site is particularly appropriate for Disaster Recovery and Continuation of Operations (COOP) needs.

Expansion, improvements and upgrades

In the fall of 2006, the size of the space available to NIH customers was doubled, from 600 to 1,200 square feet. A second cage was added to provide space for data storage hardware. Currently, the storage cage provides off-site tape backups for the mainframe and for Unix applications hosted by CIT.

In addition to the space increase, connectivity from the Sterling, VA site to the NIH Data Center was upgraded from a single OC12 to three GigE connections, one of which is currently dedicated to investigating what other Data Center services can be located off-campus. As part of this upgrade, and to provide full redundancy, additional hardware was added by NIHnet engineers, who, on January 12, 2007, completed upgrading the physical memory in the router connected to the off-campus location. With these improvements, CIT's off-campus co-location site at Sterling, VA has achieved complete redundancy.

Would you like to know more?

If you are interested in hearing more about CIT's co-location offering or touring either the on- or off-campus sites, please call the NIH Help Desk at 301-496-4357, 866-319-4357 (toll free), or 301-496-8294 (TTY) and ask to speak to someone about co-location.

HELP – I Forgot My Password! *(Revisited)*

Readers of issue 236 may remember a similar article on this service. The site has been improved since the last publication. It is easier to use and certainly worth another visit.

NIH's Center for Information Technology (CIT) has re-opened registration for **iForgotMyPW**, a self-service password management tool that **allows you to reset your password or unlock your account yourself, without calling the NIH Help Desk**.

How to register

To register for this time-saving service, simply go to http://iForgotMyPW.nih.gov, verify your account, and answer the following five identity verification questions:

1. The year you started to work at NIH? (as 4 numeric digits)
2. Your mother's first name?
3. Your birth month? (e.g., September, not as a numeric digit)
4. A four digit PIN (personal identification number)
5. The city or town name of where you were born?

What happens if I forget my password?

Now, if you forget your password, all you have to do is log on to http://iForgotMyPW.nih.gov from a computer that has access to the Internet and Microsoft Internet Explorer or Apple Safari Internet browser, correctly answer the identity questions and reset your password (or unlock your account if you have already been locked out).

The benefits of registering

Registering for iForgotMyPW is important to increasing NIH productivity - and reducing the frustration of unnecessary down time. Please take a moment now to register at http://iForgotMyPW.nih.gov. The minutes you spend today will save you many in the future.

Need help?

If you need further assistance, contact the NIH Help Desk (http://ithelpdesk.nih.gov) at 301-496-HELP (301-496-4357), 866-319-4357 (toll free), or 301-496-8294 (TTY).

Apple Support under the iSDP

Are you still buying AppleCare warranty extensions for your Apple desktop/laptop computers?

If the computers are enrolled in the Information Systems Designated Procurements (iSDP), then they may already be covered. All iSDP-enrolled Apple computer desktop and laptop models purchased between January 1, 2003, and May 1, 2006, are now covered by the extended NIH AppleCare warranty. Apple computers purchased after May 1, 2006, are covered if they replaced a machine that was already covered under this program. If the machine does not replace an existing machine with coverage, then you should purchase the AppleCare warranty extension. It will then become included in the NIH program.

What is covered?

The NIH AppleCare extended warranty provides for on-site repair for all covered Apple computers. However, there are a limited number of incidents each year, and all dispatches including no-trouble-found (NTF), software restores, and second trips will count as an individual incident. Data recovery loaners or repairs required because of damage are not covered by this extended warranty.

The warranty extension is designed to be complemented by AppleCare support, which provides software patches and access to the AppleCare Help desk. The AppleCare Helpdesk should be contacted prior to submitting a repair request.

Only the IC designated staff (a.k.a. AppleCare Contacts) may submit tickets for repairs. For a list of designated AppleCare Contacts, visit the NIH iSDP Contact Lookup page (http://isdp.cit.nih.gov/information/contact_lookup_nih.asp), and select the appropriate IC.

Can Apple users run Microsoft Vista?

All Apple computers that are enrolled in the iSDP are licensed for an instance of the Microsoft operating system Vista Enterprise. Those Apple computers that are capable of running BootCamp or Parallels Desktop for Mac (not currently available under the iSDP) are entitled to use Vista at no additional charge.

How can you tell if your machine is enrolled in the iSDP?

Contact your iSDP technician. A list of contacts, by IC, is available at http://isdp.cit.nih.gov/information/contact_lookup_nih.asp.

For additional information see http://isdp.cit.nih.gov/information/memberinfo/applecare.asp or contact the NIH Help Desk (http://ithelpdesk.nih.gov) at 301-496-HELP (301-496-4357), 866-319-4357 (toll free), or 301-496-8294 (TTY).

SAS Upgrade for z/OS System Coming in April

On April 9, 2007, Version 9.1.3 (9.1 TS1M3) of SAS will become the production version on the z/OS system (Titan). Many new features and improvements have been incorporated into Version 9.1.3. Detailed information on all the enhancements and more can be found on the online documentation (see below).

What you can do now

To ensure a smooth transition, CIT encourages all SAS users to move to Version 9.1.3 immediately and test their current SAS applications. To execute Version 9.1.3, use the following execute statement:

```
// EXEC SAS913
```

On April 9, the customary EXEC SAS statement will automatically execute Version 9.1.3.

Online SAS documentation

The Version 9.1.3 documentation is online—along with over forty other SAS manuals—enabling all SAS users to reference any of the SAS manuals instantly. For complete, detailed information from SAS on Version 9.1.3 go to **http://support.sas.com/documentation/onlinedoc/sas9doc.html**.

Any questions, comments or problems regarding Version 9.1.3 should be directed to NIH Help Desk (http://ithelpdesk.nih.gov) at 301-496-HELP (301-496-4357), 866-319-4357 (toll free), or 301-496-8294 (TTY)—ask for SAS Titan help.

The NIH Data Center and FISMA

The NIH Data Center provides a secure computing environment, suitable for applications and data categorized at the low or moderate security level (per FIPS Publication 199, *Standards for Security Categorization of Federal Information and Information System*). Whether your applications and data are hosted on a CIT-managed general support system or reside on your server in the Customer Server Area, CIT has implemented appropriate security controls conforming to the Federal Information Security Management Act of 2002 (FISMA) to protect your systems.

CIT security controls

CIT maintains physical and host system security controls and procedures to protect the computer hardware, applications, and data from improper access by unauthorized individuals and to ensure continued availability. Significant security controls include:

- Periodic risk assessments, yearly independent security reviews and penetration testing, formal security plan, and certification and accreditation
- Procedures for establishing user accounts, controls for identifying and authenticating users, and logical access controls to restrict access to system resources
- Logging, monitoring, and responding to significant security and system status events
- Regular system backups, and procedures for recovering and restoring operations following system outages
- Change control procedures covering hardware and software upgrades and patches
- Environmental controls and monitoring to ensure a stable Data Center climate, procedures and controls to restrict physical access to the Data Center, and an Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) system designed to provide all electrical services to the entire Data Center physical plant

The details are documented in a series of security plans that address the controls covering the Data Center facility itself, including the Customer Server Areas, and each hosting platform - z/OS (mainframe), Unix, and Windows. You can use the plans and the other Data Center certification and accreditation documents as building blocks for your own security plans and certification and accreditations.

Need help or have questions?

For any questions or further information you are welcome to contact Adrienne Yang, Data Center Information Security Officer, at 301-496-1053 or by email: yanga@mail.nih.gov.

Ask the NIH Help Desk

Submit a NIH Help Desk Ticket via our Web site!

- Don't have time to wait on the phone for the next available agent?
- Have you ever wondered why an agent calls you to verify your location after you send the NIH Help Desk an email?
- Do you wonder why it sometimes takes longer to receive a ticket confirmation once you send the email?

If you answered YES to any of these questions…we have just the solution for you….submit a ticket via our Web site!

Q: How does submitting a ticket answer any of the questions above?
A: Excellent question.

1. Submitting a ticket via the Web is instant and at your convenience. No waiting to talk to an agent. Once you hit **Submit Service Request** – your ticket is created!
2. When using the Web form you are able to explain your request, in your own words, and it is automatically saved in your ticket.
3. The Web form automatically pulls your current information from your NED record. All you have to do is hit **Continue**. No more spelling out your name, getting return calls and answering all those questions each agent must ask!
    a. The Web form also has a space to input any updated information or note that you are just sitting in another office for the day. Just type in your current location and the information is saved in your ticket!
4. After hitting **Submit Service Request**, your ticket is created, with all information updated to your specifications, and sent directly to the NIH Help Desk. Your confirmation and ticket number appear right away! You also have the option to search our Knowledge Base for an answer to your request.
    a. Web submits vs. emails - All regularly sent emails must travel through our system, have a ticket created, get assigned to a Help Desk agent, all information verified, THEN your ticket is saved and you receive a confirmation…who wants to wait that long?

Q: That sounds so much easier! How do I submit a ticket via the Web?
A: Just go to the NIH Help Desk's Web site – http://ithelpdesk.nih.gov.

1. Under **CONTACT THE HELP DESK**, select the **ONLINE** choice to "Click here to submit a request for support using our Web form."
2. Enter your name in the space indicated, select **GO**
3. Click on your name (there may be other users with the same name)

4. Verify your information, click **Continue**
5. A page will now appear where you can input your request
6. Notice that you can:
    a. Select a Point of Contact (POC) for your request
    b. Type your request or copy and paste your error message
    c. Select your PC or MAC platform for faster service
    d. Stipulate how an agent and/or technician should contact you (email, phone, TTY)

Submitting a ticket via our Web site is ideal for straightforward requests such as:

- Computer setups, updates
- Loaner equipment requests
- Software installation requests
- Permissions/Access requests

Did you also know...

…our Web site can help you:

- Search for a particular ticket number by selecting **TICKET SEARCH** from the menu bar.
- View your ticket history and even send an update to your ticket by selecting **SERVICE & TRAINING HISTORY** from the menu bar.

***If you have an emergency or high priority request give us a call. Our agents can get your request where it needs to go right away!**

Have more questions?

If you need any assistance, or have additional questions, just submit a ticket via our Web site! For those of you who love to talk to us, don't worry, you can still give us a call at the NIH Help Desk (http://ithelpdesk.nih.gov) at 301-496-HELP (301-496-4357), 866-319-4357 (toll free), or 301-496-8294 (TTY).

CIT Training Program's Spring Term is Budding

Spring is fast approaching with its warmer days, and a new CIT training term has begun. The term, which started in mid-February, is seeing the return of several favorites such as SPSS, SAS, Adobe Acrobat, PowerPoint, Windows XP Tips & Tricks, and many seminars for those in the scientific community. All of the courses and seminars offered by CIT are free-of-charge to NIH staff and can be found at http://training.cit.nih.gov.

The CIT Training Program strives to keep abreast of the needs of the NIH community and has incorporated several new courses into the program. With that in mind we extend an offer to anyone who would like to become one of our volunteer instructors. If you have a topic that you could teach and think it would be of interest at NIH, please contact us. If you are a project lead and you are rolling out a new or updated program, contact us and we may be able to assist you with your training needs.

New course offerings

Here are just a few of the new courses to watch for. Keep your eyes open for many other offerings as they are finalized and added to the calendar.

Apple Imaging Event
With the cooperation of Apple Computer, CIT will be hosting an event for scientists who work with scientific images. During the session, representatives from Apple and various vendors of imaging software will offer demonstrations and then provide a hands-on session in the afternoon. This seminar has been scheduled in the Natcher complex to accommodate all Mac users who wish to improve their scientific images.

Macintosh OS X Tips and Tricks
This lecture-seminar has been **re-designed**. If you are a Mac user and are seeking to improve your efficiency on and enjoyment with the Macintosh and the OS X operating system, this is the class for you. Navigation of the Operating System along with demonstration of useful keyboard shortcuts and built-in features will be covered. The course will accommodate a free-flow of questions and answers to focus on students' interests.

Consolidated Network Monitoring System (CNMS)
CNMS monitors all ICs network devices and provides a view of NIH network devices and their associated business impact. It provides either an IC-specific view or building view as needed to help pinpoint impacted locations and the approximate number of users affected by an outage. This allows network administrators to define routine maintenance and use the event Alarmpoint engine for proactive notification via phone or email.

Web Application Testing Using Selenium
Selenium is a new open-source test tool for Web applications that runs directly in a browser and supports a wide range of browsers and operating systems. It is a valuable tool for both browser compatibility testing and system functional testing, and can be integrated with automated testing frameworks, like jUnit. This hands-on course will introduce the Selenium suite of tools including Selenium Core, Selenium IDE, and Selenium Remote Control.

Grants
In order to keep up with the large interest in QVR training, the QVR courses are being revised and expanded to provide increasing opportunities for learning to use the system. We will also be offering courses in the IMPACII Subproject Module.

Contact us

As always, all of the courses and seminars offered by CIT are free-of-charge to NIH staff. For complete course descriptions or to register for a course, please visit our Web site at http://training.cit.nih.gov. If you prefer, you may call us at 301-594-6248 to discuss course registration, teaching a class, or other training-related issues.

Dates to Remember

Now . . .

February	•	CIT Training Program Spring term starts. [http://training.cit.nih.gov]
February 20	•	NBS launch of *Supply and Replenishment and ass. Financials*.
March 11	•	Daylight Savings Begins (Spring Forward)
March 12	•	Titan use of ONAMES servers discontinued [see *Titan News* article of 1/25/07 at http://datacenter.cit.nih.gov/titannews]
April 9	•	SAS upgrade for z/OS system T

Later this year . . .

May	•	NBS release of *Acquisitions, Contracts, Property, and their ass. Financials*.
July 16-17	•	Disaster recovery off-site test. E T [http://datacenter.cit.nih.gov/disaster]

E EOS (Unix system)
T Titan (OS/390 system)

Articles in other issues of *Interface* appear in brackets [ ].

Subscribe to the "Interface" list via Listserv to receive notification of new issues as soon as they are available on the Web [http://list.nih.gov/archives/interface.html].

Publications

The following documents have become available since the last issue of *Interface* and can be obtained from the CIT publications web page [http://publications.cit.nih.gov/]. Publications are provided in hardcopy, on-line, or PDF versions under the "View/Print on Demand" (VPOD) system.

To be notified when new or updated documentation has been added to the VPOD system, join the Listserv list, "CIT-doc-renew" [http://list.nih.gov/archives/cit-doc-renew.html].

General Documentation

Procedures for Deregistration Officials and Account Sponsors February 2007

Titan (IBM z/OS Servers)

Updated

Titan User's Guide December 2006

EOS (Unix Servers)

Updated

EOS User's Guide September 2006

Directories and Reference Information

NIH Computer Center Hardware and Software
[http://datacenter.cit.nih.gov/if.backpage.html]

Computer Services Telephone Directory
[http://datacenter.cit.nih.gov/tel.num.txt.html]

Online Services Directory
[http://datacenter.cit.nih.gov/online.access.txt.html]

Popular Web Sites for NIH Computer Center Users
[http://datacenter.cit.nih.gov/www.dir.html]

Major Contributors

Carleen Akeem, DCSS
Marina Amoroso, OD/NBS
Doug Ashbrook, DCSS
Eric Cole, OD/NBS
Susan Chaffee, DCS
Ray Danner, DCS
Phil Day, DCS
Kristen Dunn-Thomason, DCS
Sarah Fichter, DCSS
Thorsten Fjellsted, CIT/OD
David Hunter, DCS
Melissa Moore, DCS
Candice Peacock, DCS
Kathy Scalzi, DCSS
Michele Schwartzman, DCS
Norma Stern, DCSS
Chantel Walker, DCSS
Adrienne Yang, DCSS

CIT	Center for Information Technology
DCS	Division of Customer Support
DCSS	Division of Computer System Services
NBS	NIH Business System
OD	Office of the Director